

THE Christian History;

Containing Accotns of the Propagation and Revival
of Religion in *Great Britain, America, &c.*

Saturday FEBRUARY 23. 1744,5. N° 104.

*Accounts of the Revival of Religion in Boston,
finished.*

IN the following Month came out of the Press in *Boston*,
a Book composed by the Rev. Mr. Dickinson of *Elizabeth Town, New-Jersey*, intituled, ‘*A Display of GOD’s
special GRACE*: In a familiar Dialogue between a
Minister and a Gentleman of his Congregation, about the
WORK of GOD, in the Conviction and Conversion of Sin-
ners, so remarkably of late begun and going on in these
American Parts: Wherein the OBJECTIONS against some
uncommon Appearances among us are distinctly consider’d,
MISTAKES rectify’d, and the WORK itself particularly
prov’d to be from the HOLY SPIRIT: With an ADDI-
TION, in a second Conference, relating to sundry Antis-
tian Principles, beginning to obtain in some Places: To
which is prefixed an ATTESTATION, by several Ministers
of Boston.’

And the principal Paragraphs of the ATTESTATION
are as follow, ‘ He must be a Stranger in *Israel*, who has
not heard of the uncommon religious Appearances in the
several Parts of this Land, among Persons of all Ages & Char-
acters. This is an Affair which has in some Degree
drawn every One’s Attention, and been the Subject of
much Debate both in Conversation and Writing. And
the grand Question is, --- *Whether it be a Work of GOD,*
and how far it is so? The most serious and judicious,
both Ministers and Christians, have look’d upon it to be,
in the main, a genuine Work of God, and the Effect of
that Effusion of the SPIRIT of Grace, which the Faithful
have been praying, hoping, longing and waiting for;

F f f ‘ while

while at the same Time they have look'd upon some Circumstances attending it, to be from natural Temper, human Weakness, or the Subtilty and Malice of Satan permitted to counter-act this divine Operation. But here rightly to distinguish is a Matter of no small Difficulty; and requires both a scriptural Knowledge of, and an experimental Acquaintance with the Things of the Spirit of GOD. Mr. Edwards's Discourse concerning the distinguishing Marks of a Work of the SPIRIT of GOD, has met with deserv'd Acceptance, and been of great Use.--- The following Performance, by another dear and reverend Brother in a different Part of the Country, is also, in our Opinion, exceeding well adapted to serve the same Design, viz. to help People to judge of the present Work, whether, and how far it is of GOD; and to remove those Prejudices, which may keep them from owning it to the Honour of GOD, and from coming under the Power of it to their own Salvation. Here the Reader will see the ordinary Work of the Spirit of Grace, in applying the Redemption purchased by CHRIST to particular Souls, judiciously described, in several distinct Parts of it, Conviction, Conversion, and Consolation: The Necessity of Regeneration and Faith in order to final Salvation, and the Necessity of Conviction and Humiliation in order to these, clearly evinced, from the Reason and Nature of the Thing, as well as the Method GOD has established in his Word: Mistakes, which might prove fatal and undoing, carefully guarded against: And very safe and suitable Directions given to one who is awakened to that Enquiry, What must I do to be saved?--- Whoever takes up this Book and reads, has as it were in his Hands a Glass, in which he may behold what Manner of Person he is; whether a natural or renewed Man, a Hypocrite or a sound Believer. And in recommending this Book to the World, we would be understood as owning, and bearing a publick Testimony to, what is call'd the present Work of GOD in this Land, as it is here stated and distinguish'd (separate from those Disorders, Errors, and Delusions, which are only the unhappy Accidents sometimes accompanying of it) to be such a glorious Display of the divine Power and Grace, as may well raise our Wonder, excite our Praises, and engage our Prayers for the Preservation and Progress of it. May the Children of

God

• God then unite in that Prayer, *Let thy Work appear more
and more unto thy Servants, and thy Glory unto their Chil-
dren; And the Beauty of the LORD our GOD be up-
on us!*

• Boston, Aug.
• 10. 1742.

• Benjamin Colman,
• Joseph Sewall,
• Thomas Prince,
• John Webb,
• William Cooper,
• Thomas Foxcroft,
• Joshua Gee.

In December was printed Here, a Treatise of the Rev. Mr. Gilbert Tennent against the Moravian Errors: Which Treatise was introduced with a Preface by several Ministers of this Town, and the final Paragraph thereof is this----

“ When this our dear BROTHER, whose Praise is in our Churches thro’ the Provinces, visited us at Boston two Years ago, and in the Spirit of the Reverend Mr. WHITEFIELD entered into his Labours here; it pleased God in a wonderful Manner to crown his abundant Services with Success, in the Conviction and (we trust) Conversion of many Souls: As therefore the Name of Mr. Tennent is greatly endeared to us, so we beseech our ascended SAVIOUR, the HEAD of the Church, long to continue Him for a burning Light and extensive Blessing to our Provinces; and in particular to use this faithful, judicious and seasonable Endeavour of his Servant, for a Guard and Defence about his own sacred Truths and his glorious Work in the Midst of us, which too many are ready to speak Evil of and oppose.

Boston, Dec. 22. 1742.

Benjamin Colman
Thomas Prince
John Webb
William Cooper
Thomas Foxcroft
Joshua Gee.

Some Time after, a Man of the separate Society became a Saturday-Baptist: who being dip’d in the Country, and having Hands laid on him, thought himself a Minister, drew five Women after him & proceeded to dip them: yet they all have since deserted him. But six Males of the said Society with one of Brookline, a Town about five Miles off, went on to associate

ciate as a Church, owning the *Assembly's Confession of Faith*, and professing themselves *Congregational* according to our *New-England Platform*: And have not yet returned to the several Churches whence they went; tho' the Rev. Mr. *Davenport* has happily seen and most ingenuously confessed his above-said Errors and Misconduct, and published his *Retractations*. See *Christian History* N^o. 82, 83.

Besides the aforesaid four *Males* and two or three *Females* of the *South Church*, I know not any who have left our *Communion*. But the rest of our said numerous and former Additions continue with us; and as far as I know, their Conversation is as becomes the *Gospel*. Nor do I hear of more than one of those who have left our *Church* that has fallen into other censurable Evil, nor in the other *Churches* in Town, except a few of the *New North*.

July 7. 1743, there met in *Boston* one of the largest *Assembly of Ministers* that ever convened *Here*, to bear their *Testimony* to this remarkable Revival in the *Land*; when *Ten Ministers* of this *Town*, joined with many others in giving their *publick Testimony* to this happy Work: An Account of which is printed in the *Christian History*, N^o. 20, &c.

On Dec. 13. following, this *Town* and *Land* received a great Loss in the Death of the Rev. Mr. *Cooper*. An Account of which, with his deserved Character, is in N^o. 43. To which I would add the further Account of the Rev. Dr. *Colman* in his Funeral Sermon the *Lord's-Day* after, since published, in the following Terms,--- ' Mr. *Cooper* was as fix'd and firm against the *Spirit of Separation* from the Churches of *New-England*, which he judg'd to be strongly settled on the *Platform of Scripture*; as any *Rock* on our Coasts is *unshaken* by the furious *Waves* that only break themselves into *Foam* by dashing against it: And had he liv'd he would have been a most strenuous *Opposer* of this *Defection*: But at the same Time he was immovably determined, as we all know, that there has been a remarkable *Work of GOD* going on among us, by what he had seen with his Eyes, had look'd upon, and as it were handled, in the *Resort* to him (and some other *Ministers* of the *Town*) of a *Multitude* of Persons, younger and older, under strong Convictions, Humiliation, Illuminations, godly Fear, with strong Crying and Tears; Faith, Hope, Trust, Joy, with strong Reliance on the Righteousness of *CHRIST* for Justification

fication, and on the ALMIGHTY SPIRIT of Grace in a sovereign Manner to enable them unto all the Duties of a sober righteous and godly Life ; to work in 'em both to will and to do, to begin and carry on his good Work in their Souls ; and to keep them by his mighty Power thro' Faith to Salvation :---And among these there were Numbers overflowing with the Joys and Comforts of Religion, in the utmost Abhorrence of themselves and repenting as in Dust and Ashes ; while the Love of God seem'd to be shed abroad in their Hearts, in their fervent Desires after and Pleasure in the Convictions and Conversion of others :--- The numerous Instances of this Nature, with whom he daily conversed, gave him abundant Satisfaction of the Presence and Power of the SANCTIFIER and COMFORTER in and with many of them. I think my self also now called by the Providence of GOD to add,---that as I was my self struck with Wonder at what of this Nature occur'd to me two Years ago among the young People of this Flock, so the good Fruits of their abiding Profession unto this Day, in a discreet, meek, virtuous, pious Conversation, give me Satisfaction and Pleasure in them from Day to Day ; while their exemplary Face of grave Devotion, and diligent Attention to the WORD of GOD, on Lord's-Days and Lectures, are also adorning to the Doctrine of GOD their SAVIOUR.

Of all who resorted to me from all the Congregations in Town, I remember no more than three or four who talked of their Impulses : and but one or two of these a Subject of the late Revival ; the other two had been Communicants in two of our Churches, and used to speak of those Things before. Nor in all the Preaching of the Instruments of this Work in Town, did I ever hear any teach to follow Impulses or any religious Impressions but of the WORD of GOD upon our Minds, Affections, Wills and Consciences ; and which agreeable to the HOLY SCRIPTURE, the most famous Reformers and Puritan Ministers both in England, Scotland, and New-England, have in their Writings taught us.

As to the doctrinal Principles of those who continue in our Congregations and have been the Subjects of the late Revival ; they are the same as they have been all along instructed in, from the Westminster Assembly's shorter Catechism : which has been generally receiv'd and taught in the Churches of New-England from its first Publication for these hundred Years to this

this Day ; and which is therefore the System of Doctrine most generally and clearly declarative of the Faith of the *New-England* Churches.

And tho' some have represented many of the Subjects of this Work as holding some or other of the following mischievous Errors ; viz. (1) That sanctifying Grace in a Minister is necessary to render the Administrations of Gospel Ordinances valid : (2) That unconverted Ministers are incapable to be Instruments of converting People : (3) That Sanctification [as described in the Assembly's shorter Catechism] is no Evidence of Justification : (4) That an unregenerate Man ought not to pray : And (5) That Assurance is essential to saving Faith, so as whoever believes is sure he believes in a saving Manner, and is not in Doubt or Darknes about it : --- Upon a careful Enquiry I cannot find nor hear of any of the Subjects of this Work remaining in our several Congregations in Town ; no, nor even in that which has drawn off from us, who hold these or any other *Familistical* or *Antinomian* Errors.

However, the sovereign SPIRIT in his awakening Influence in the unconverted, and his *inlivening* Efficacy in the hopefully renewed, in this Town, has seem'd these *two last Years* in a gradual and awful Manner to withdraw. For a *Twelvemonth* I have rarely heard the Cry of any new Ones--- *What shall I do to be saved?* --- But few are now added to our Churches, and the *heavenly Shower* in Boston seems to be over. Of those who were in the late Effusion wrought on, diverse are sometimes repairing to me, with *sad Complaints* of their spiritual Dulnes, Darkness and Decays ; but I hope are working out their Salvation with Fear and Trembling : while some have now and then a *fresh Revival* of Grace and Comfort.

Thus have I endeavoured a *brief* and *plain* Account of the late *Revival* in this Town ; especially among the People who resorted to me, and more particularly those of the *Assembly I belong to*, according to my Observation and Intelligence : relating only those Facts which seem'd to me, as I went along to be most material ; avoiding personal Reflections, and writing, as I always desire, with Candor and Moderation. I leave it as a grateful publick *Testimony* of the memorable *Work* of the *divine Power and Grace* among us in my Day, which my Eyes have seen and my Ears have heard with Pleasure ;

sure ; that GOD the FATHER, SON and SPIRIT may have the more extensive Praise, to whose Blessing I confign it ; and that others may thereby receive eternal Benefit.

Boston, Nov. 26. 1744.

Thomas Prince.

N. B. Page For

Read

387, 388. *Animal Passions*---- *Natural Passions*
388 *Animal Terrors*---- *Natural Terrors*

To the marginal Note Page 408, add--- : besides Three
Episcopal Congregations.

P. S. The former Part of this Narrative I drew up near a
Year ago ; the latter lately. And I have made several Observa-
tions on what I have seen & heard ; but for want of Room
must here omit them.

To the Publisher of the CHRISTIAN HISTORY.

SIR,

Please to give the following Lines a Place in your weekly Paper,
and you'll oblige, your Friend and Servant,

David Hall.

WHEREAS some Passages in my Letter concerning the
late happy Revival of Religion here in Sutton, placed
in the first Page of your Christian History of July 28. 1744.
(altho' I apprehended every candid Reader might easily have
perceived my true Meaning in them) yet have by some been
grossly misunderstood : I now freely declare (as doubtless I
have a Right to explain my self) that I am far from design-
ing by those Sentences, to reflect Contempt upon the proper
Usefulness of *human Learning* ; or to discourage hard Study,
close argumentative Preaching, and suitably imbellish'd with
acceptable Words : which are useful in their Place ; altho'
after our highest Encomiums upon *external Means*, they are
not to have such Virtue ascribed to them, as tho' sufficient
to beget Men to CHRIST. In Reference to this, I may
without Disparagement to *human Reason* and *Learning*, say
with the Apostle Paul, 1 Cor. 1. 20. *Where is the wise?* *where is the Scribe?* *where is the Disputer of this World?*
Hath not God made foolish the Wisdom of this World?

GOD is not obliged to follow those Means which to Men
appear best, with the most Success. He is sovereign in all
the Dispensations of his Grace ; so then, it is not of him that
willeth, nor of him that runneth, or reasoneth, but of GOD
that sheweth Mercy. I

I can uprightly speak it, that my sole *Design* in those *Passages* was this; that I might ascribe all the Glory of the late blessed Work of divine Grace among us, to the Influences of the SPIRIT of GOD. And I cannot by any Means discover, how a full Ascription of Success to GOD should be any Way prejudicial to human Industry.

As for a rambling indigested Way of Preaching, I do freely testify against it: But yet I can by no Means think it the Duty of Ministers to confine themselves invariably to their Notes, or particular studied Sentences, so as at no Time to alter, add to, or diminish from, what has been before pen'd down by them; especially when in delivering GOD's sacred Truths to Men, their *Hearts* and *Lips* are, as sometimes, *touched as with a Coal from his Altar*.

Moreover, I am perswaded GOD hath often own'd and bless'd some new and present Thoughts which have occur'd in delivering a Sermon: And provided they have been safely express'd, and are no other than plain, solid, and scriptural Truths; I cannot discern, with what Reason in the World, any Man should find Fault.

There is another *Passage* in the *Page* following the fore-mentioned, allow me to explain. The Words are these, (*That I do venture my Salvation upon it that this is God's blessed Work*) understand me thus, That I do resign my self to GOD, in Hope of *Salvation*, thro' the *blessed Influences* of the *same Grace*, that hath been thro' JESUS CHRIST so abundantly in these Years shed abroad among us.

Sutton, January 28. 1744, 5.

David Hall.

THus, according to the *Design* of this Paper and from the best and most authentick Materials we could obtain, we have given the Reader a **SPECIMEN** of that wondrous Work of GOD which has been in the midst of these Years revived in many Parts of Great Britain and America: And as the present Paper concludes the Year and therewith the Christian History, and there are some remarkable Narratives yet unprinted and others daily expected; it is propos'd to publish them in intire Pieces of about three Sheets once a Quarter at 12d New Tenor; and those who would encourage their Publication are desired to send their Names to Kneeland & Green in Queen-street.

The Title Page and Index to this Volume will be speedily sent to the Subscribers, when it is expected they will send in their Datas

